

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An insulated pouch comprising:
 - (a) a sealed flexible bag comprising a food product, the flexible bag not being permeable to water and having an opening means suitable to generate an access opening large enough to enable a consumer to consume food product directly from the insulated pouch;
wherein said sealed flexible bag further comprises an oxygen barrier comprising polyvinylidene chloride, ethylene vinyl alcohol or both; and
 - (b) an insulating layer covering at least a portion of the sealed flexible bag;
wherein said insulating layer covers at least a portion of both sides of the flexible bag and is positioned from about 0.5 to about 3.0 cm above the base of the insulated pouch;
wherein the insulating layer covers at least about 50% of the flexible bag;
wherein the insulating layer further comprises an attaching means for attaching an eating utensil;

wherein the insulated pouch can be heated in a microwave oven and held by a consumer after heating; and
wherein the insulated pouch has a base suitable to enable the insulated pouch to stand.
2. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 1 wherein the food product comprises soup, pasta, meat, rice, potato, cheese, vegetable or a combination thereof.

3. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 1 wherein the sealed flexible bag comprises polyolefin, polypropylene, polyethylene, polyester, polyimide, polyamide, blends thereof or copolymers thereof.

4. (canceled)

5. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 1 wherein the insulating layer comprises paperboard, polyester or polypropylene.

6. (canceled)

7. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 1 wherein the insulating layer covers from about 65% to about 85% of the flexible bag.

8. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 1 wherein the insulating layer comprises advertising material selected from the group consisting of a company name, product logo, marketing slogan and cooking instructions.

9. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 1 wherein the opening means is positioned towards a top portion of the insulated pouch.

10. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 9 wherein the opening means can be pulled, cut or torn in order to generate the access opening.

11-12. (canceled)

13. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 1 wherein above the opening means is a top section that is suitable for tearing.

14. (original) The insulated pouch according to claim 13 wherein the top section comprises an orifice to hang the insulated pouch.

15. (canceled)

16. (withdrawn) A method for consuming a food product comprising the steps of:

- a) placing an insulated pouch in a microwave oven for a predetermined time to heat the food product;
- b) removing the insulated pouch from the microwave oven; and
- c) opening the insulated pouch and consuming the food product directly therefrom wherein the insulated pouch comprises:
 - (i) a sealed flexible bag comprising the food product, the flexible bag not being permeable to water and having an opening means suitable to generate an access opening large enough to enable a consumer to consume the food product directly from the insulated pouch; and
 - (ii) an insulating layer covering at least a portion of the sealed flexible bag,

further wherein the insulated pouch is suitable to be held directly in a hand of the consumer during food product consumption.

17. (withdrawn) The method of consuming a food product according to claim 16 wherein the insulating layer covers at least about 50% of the flexible bag.

18. (withdrawn) The method of consuming a food product according to claim 16 wherein the food product comprises soup, pasta, meat, rice, potato, cheese, vegetable or a combination thereof.

19. (withdrawn) The method of consuming a food product according to claim 16 wherein the insulating layer further comprises an attaching means for attaching an eating utensil.